

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

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FOR COERR, SMITHSONIAN FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TPHY, OSCI, TS

SUBJ: BACCAR CASE

REF: (A) TUNIS 1305

1. DURING MEETING MARCH 10 WITH MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE HASSEN BELKHOJA, AMBASSADOR REVIEWED BACCAR CASE. INTER ALIA AMBASSADOR ASKED MINISTER WHETHER, AS MAJAME BACCAR HAD ALLEGED, HE HAD AUTHORIZED HER TO CONTINUE TO OCCUPY HER OFFICE AT SORTING CENTER AKTER HER CONTRACT ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1974. MINISTER REPLIED THAT BACCAR HAD COME TO HIM TO COMPLAIN AGAINST SORTING CENTER AND HAJ ASKED FOR HIS SUPPORT. HE SAUD, HOWEVER, THAT HE HAD TOLD HER THERE WAS NOTHING HE COULD DO SINCE SHE WAU BOUND BY HER CONTRAKT AND SHE WOULD HAVE TO RESOLVE MATTER WITH MMSC. MINISTER CHARACTERIZED BACCAR AS "EXCITABLE" AND EXPRESSED VIEW THAT SHE IS NOT TUNISIAN IN ORIGIN.

2. AMBASSADOR ALSO NOTED THAT SINCE SMITHOSINIAN AND TUNISIAN GOVERNMENT ARE CO-OPERATORS OF SORTING CENTER, BACCAR CASE AGAINST MEMEZ AND SMITHSONIAN MUST NECESSARILY ALSO INVOLVE TUNISIAN GOVERNMENT. BELKHOJA REACTED TO THIS OBSERVATION BY SHRUGGING HIS SHOULDERS AND IN EFFECT SAYING "NEVER MIND". HE ASKED FOR IDENTITY OF LOCAL SMITHSONIAN LAWYER. UPON LEARNING IT WAS DAKHLAOU, BELKHOJA REACTED AS NEGATIVELY AS HAD HAIB BOURGUIBA, JR. HE RECOMMENDED

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STRONGLY THAT SMITHSONIAN SHOULD DISMISS HIM AND EXPRESSED

VIEW THAT IN RETAINING DAKHLAOUI SMITHSONIAN COULD LOSE CASE.
HE VOLUNTEERED NAME OF ANOTHER LAWYER WHOM HE ASSURED US WOULD
"TAKE CARE OF MATTER EFFECTIVELY".

3. COMMENT. IN VIEW OF STRONG RECOMMENDATIONS THAT
SMITHSONIAN TERMINATE SERVICES OF DAKHALOUI, SMITHSONIAN
MAY WISH TO CONSIDER SENDING ROBINSON OUT AGAIN FOR
PURPOSE OF LOCATING LAWYER ENJOYING BETTER REPUTATION.
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